

## **Gloves by peridotie**

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**Summary:**

Will and Mike go ice skating, but falling for Mike wheeler is much worse than falling on ice.

## Gloves

### Author's Note:

I finally finished this, which i originally posted on tumblr. I hope you all enjoy this as much as you did the first part, im also open to requests and/or criticism!!

"Will? Will, are you there? Over."

Will was startled by the sound of his supercom, a familiar voice heard through the static. He put down his sketchbook and crayons and reached under his bed to pick up the radio.

"Yeah," he said into the receiver, "Is that you, Mike? Over." Will took his thumb off of the button and waited patiently for an answer, biting his lip. He really, really hoped it was Mike. After seeing him on Christmas with all of the other boys to show eachother what presents they got, he just couldn't seem to get Mike out of his head.

Will had given Mike a drawing of them as his gift, arms on eachother's shoulders in a forest scene. He had slaved over that drawing for weeks, changing it constantly to make sure it was perfect enough for Mike. He had originally drawn them holding hands, but realized that would be too much, too obvious, too shameful. Will wished he could have given Mike something more, but Joyce was tight on money since she bought him an Atari, and was already working overtime to make up for the time and money she'd lost while Will was missing. She said Will should just make Mike something, something from the heart. Will wished he could, but what his heart really said was too terrifying to admit.

Mike had loved the drawing, lovingly pointing out how long it must have taken Will to do. He then pulled Will into a long hug, one that startled the boy and put a blush on his cold cheeks. Mike had whispered something about how glad he was Will was home. Will had thought about what he said for days, spending many nights laying awake and thinking of Mike.

It was January now, the Indiana winter still biting and cold. The coldness reminded Will all too much of the frigid atmosphere of The Upside Down, but he was never afraid of the cold when he was with friends, especially Mike. Will actually had a lot of fun in the snow most of the time, sledding and goofing off with his brother almost every day. It was the cold nights when he couldn't sleep as he remembered the never ending chill of The Upside Down, the days when snow was suddenly stained black and red when he coughed and gagged, harshly inhaling the freezing air until he felt like his chest was about to burst. Those were the times when Will couldn't stand the cold and snow.

Will's thoughts were interrupted as the voice came back, crackly and warm over the static. "Yeah, it's Mike," he said, to Will's utter delight. "I was wondering if you wanted to go ice skating tonight? At six o'clock. My family said I could bring a friend! Over."

Will's heart fluttered. Ice skating with Mike. Will sighed just at the idea, and the fact that Mike wanted to take him...

"Y-yeah! I'll ask my mom, It should be okay. Over," Will responded excitedly. He was so happy that he had to bite his tongue so he wouldn't squeak, but he still hugged his supercom to his chest.

Mike continued on with details, saying his mom would take Will there and Jonathan was going to pick him up, but Will was hardly listening. He hadn't ice skated in ages, but other than the fact he was embarrassed he'd fall in front of Mike, Will was absolutely ecstatic.

"Sound good? Over." Will sighed and touched a hand to his cheek.

"Sounds great, Mike. See you there."

"Will! Mike's here!" Joyce was screaming back into the hall from the front door to Will, who quickly grabbed his backpack filled with things like snacks, money, and some extra clothes that Joyce insisted he bring. The boy stumbled out of his bedroom and raced down the hall clumsily, sliding to a stop in front of Mike.

Mike was standing on Will's front steps, rocking on his heels and smiling at his friend. He wore a green windbreaker over a comfortable hoodie, and had a beanie pulled up over his head. Will was wearing a big, oversized sweater of Jonathan's underneath an old snow jacket, with an ugly striped scarf wrapped neatly around his neck. But Will wasn't even thinking about how worn his clothes must have seemed compared to Mike's new, fashionable ones. He had other things on his mind.

"Ready?" Mike nodded towards his car, where Mrs. Wheeler waved from the window. Will nodded, bade farewell to his fussing mother, and walked with Mike to the station wagon.

"Hello, Will," Mrs. Wheeler greeted as the two boys slid into the car's back seat. "Are you ready to go ice skating?"

Will nodded eagerly, and Mike scoffed. "That's a dumb question, mom," he said "Of course he is!"

Karen frowned, but quickly laughed as the car started pulling away from Will's driveway. "I just assumed you'd both be more excited since Holly and Nancy aren't coming, Michael."

Will then noticed the lack of both of Mike's sisters. It was strange that Holly wasn't with them, since usually Mrs. Wheeler insisted on bringing her to play with the boys, much to their annoyance.

Mrs. Wheeler didn't have time to let Will ask where they were. "Holly is sick at home, and Nancy was going to come with Steve--" she looked back at the boys through the rear view mirror "--but they probably didn't want you two to interrupt their date."

The way the word "date" rolled off of Mrs. Wheeler's tongue made it sound like something scandalous, forbidden. Will could have sworn she was looking at him when she said it. He started to sweat, did she know? How could she know? Fidgeting, Will nodded wordlessly, terrified that Mrs. Wheeler somehow knew Will considered this outing with Mike a date. If she knew...

"Come on, we aren't that bad," Mike interrupted, "We don't care about that couple stuff anyway, right, Will?" Mike smirked and winked at

his friend. Will laughed.

"Uh huh," he muttered in agreement. The way Mike teasingly shared a smirk with Will made it seem like Mike was being sarcastic about what he said, and Will had a feeling he was. I mean, of course they cared about couple stuff! They were only human, why wouldn't Mike be interested in snooping around his older sister's relationships?

But maybe, Will thought, maybe he was interested in a different relationship...

Will could have kicked himself for thinking that. His head was so mixed up he couldn't help silently begging, wishing Mike might have similar feelings towards Will. He chewed at his nails. Slipping and falling on the ice would be far less painful than falling for Mike Wheeler.

Once they made it to the ice rink, Will and Mike raced each other to the booth where the ice skates were being handed out, and shoved their crumpled dollar bills towards the man at the counter. They grabbed their skates and plopped down onto the carpeted benches, they were slightly damp from the ice and snow falling off of everyone's clothes.

Will glanced at Mike, who was fussing with his laces and trying to untangle them. Will noticed Mike wore no gloves, his fingertips slightly pink compared to the rest of his pale skin.

"Mike, where are your gloves?"

"Not on my hands, it looks like."

"Don't be a smart-aleck," Will remarked. He looked down and started tying his skates, smiling. Will thought about giving his gloves to Mike, but decided against it. He had a spare pair in his bag if Mike wanted them.

"Well, I don't think my hands are cold," Mike mused, "do you?" Will gasped as Mike grabbed Will's face and turned his head so they were facing one another. Will gripped Mike's wrist in shock, ready to pry his friend's freezing hands off of his cheeks. Mike's hands were like

ice cubes, yet he held Will's face so tenderly it took Will a few moments to finally push his friend away. Mike snorted with laughter, reeling back and shoving his hands in his pockets.

"Jerk," Will mumbled. His face felt hot despite Mike's cool touch. If Will didn't do something about his crush on Mike, he knew he was doomed. But he would rather be buried alive than have to admit his crush on his best friend. Maybe if he ignored it it would go away.

Mrs. Wheeler told the boys that she would be reading her book with some coffee and to come get her if they needed anything. They agreed and raced onto the ice, looking around at the vast, white plane packed with people. All kinds of them whizzed by, some racing around faster than Will thought was possible, others cruising slowly, some clutching the wall in terror with trembling knees.

Will hadn't been ice skating in a few years, but he figured his experience at their local roller skating rink would be enough to keep him steady. He and Mike stepped carefully onto the ice, Will cautiously taking a few steps towards the wall just in case.

"Come on, we should do a warm up lap," Mike exclaimed, starting to slide forward. Will nodded and the two clumsily started around the ice, getting a feel for the environment. Mike was slow enough to stay next to Will for the warm up lap, but as soon as they passed the entrance Mike kicked off in a blur of ice and a flash of green.

"Hey, Mike, wait!" Will started off shakily, trying to catch up to Mike. He giggled, surging forward and eventually ending up right beside him. Mike gave a toothy grin.

"First one to get to that side of the wall wins," Mike yelled, starting to try going even faster. Will accepted the challenge, his legs pushing off the ice as hard as they could. He swerved through crowds of people, dodging kids and focusing on reaching the far side of the wall.

Will passed Mike and was about to make it to the wall when he turned and gave a triumphant grin towards Mike.

Suddenly, Will wobbled slightly. Out of nowhere his skates collided, one kicking up into the air. Will quickly lost balance and hit the ice

with a painful thump. His hands tried to break the fall, but they didn't help much. Will slid forward and spun, slowing to a stop right against the wall.

Mike skidded to a stop in front of Will, shaking with laughter. He leaned against the wall, stifling his giggles by covering his face. "Holy crap," he gasped, "You got a little ahead of yourself. You alright?"

Will couldn't help laughing with Mike, just thinking of how ridiculous he must have looked when he fell was enough to make anybody laugh. Despite the cheerful distraction, Will soon noticed the coldness of the ice seeping through him, almost burning his skin.

Will looked at his gloves, which were now soaking wet. Sighing, he slipped them off and shoved them into his pocket.

Mike extended his hand and grabbed Will's, pulling him to his feet and steadyng him. As soon as Mike's warm, soft hand gripped Will's cold one Will felt like he had been shocked. Daringly, he adjusted his hand to get a better grip on Mike's. He could feel Mike's wrist against his own, their fingers curled around eachother. Mike's pulse was beating comfortingly against the unsteady one belonging to Will.

Will glanced up from their hands to Mike, who's face was tinged a soft red. Will was surprised, usually he was the one who was a blushing wreck around Mike (granted, he still was, and his knees were shaking so hard he thought he might fall again). But now they were here, hands intertwined, both unsure of how to feel or what to do. It made Will feel good that Mike was blushing because of him, that he wasn't the only one nervous about this intimacy.

"What happened to your gloves," Mike choked out uncertainly, like his tongue was trying to say something else.

"They got wet, but it's alright." Will wasn't lying, but he also knew that he much preferred being able to feel Mike's skin against his own instead of against his gloves.

Mike frowned. "Well, your hands have got to get warm somehow, right?" He then took Will's other hand and put it in between both of his, trying to warm them up, massaging his fingers. Finally, Mike

took both of Will's hands and pressed them against his own freckled cheeks. Will held Mike's head in his hands, once again staring lovingly at his innocent, grinning face.

Will laughed, "Oh, is this supposed to make me forgive you for putting your cold hands on my face?"

Mike shook his head. "It's only fair."

Will's mind was racing. He wished they were alone, or that he was more brave so he could do something other than stare longingly at Mike, other than refuse to look him in the eye, other than lie to everyone about how he felt.

Mike smiled mischeviously, the blush nearly gone from his face. He leaned forward suddenly and, with a crack, smacked his forehead hard against Will's in a playful head butt. The soft, warm atmosphere that had engulfed them dissapated as Will pushed himself away from Mike, a sharp pain in his forehead that left him slightly dizzy.

Mike laughed again, slightly nervous as Will rubbed his forehead, trying to steady his heart after the panic of seeing Mike lean in so close to him. He had gotten so close, Will swore he was about to be kissed. He couldn't help feeling slightly disappointed, but he was equally disgusted he would ever think such a thing.

"Boys!" Will jumped and turned to look where the voice was coming from. It was Mrs. Wheeler, who tried desperately to wave down the two boys. Will gulped, hoping she hadn't seen how tenderly he and Mike had been acting. Mike started to skate towards his mother, and Will followed reluctantly.

Will reached the concerned mother, slowed down, and stopped alongside the wall, seeing the concerned look on Mrs. Wheeler's face.

"I saw you fall," she exclaimed, "Are you alright?! Oh, goodness, are you crying?"

Will, embarrassed, shook his head. He had tears well up at first when he fell, but he was alright now. "I'm fine, Mrs. Wheeler," he said cheerfully, but his voice still cracked.

"Why don't you both come sit down for a second? I'll grab you some hot chocolate," Karen offered softly, but she was stern. Will could tell it was a demand.

Begrudgingly, the boys stepped off the rink and walked towards the small tables adjacent to the wall. They didn't sit down.

"You look like you're freezing, Will," Mike said gently. He smiled weakly at his friend, who returned the gesture wholeheartedly

"I'm just a little wet," Will muttered, not wanting Mike to worry. He still had the spare clothes, but didn't want to deal with changing. Plus, as much as he hated to admit it, the extra attention from Mike was nice, too.

Suddenly, Mike stepped forward and grabbed Will, pulling him to his chest in a tight hug. Will took a deep breath, Mike smelled like soap, home, familiarity. Will held onto Mike for as long as he could. Slowly, the comforting and warm atmosphere between the boys that Will loved more than anything returned.

Mike slowly pulled away as Karen came with the hot chocolate. Will accepted the hot cup gratefully, sipping on the drink and heating his fingertips. It helped warm up his insides, but Will was already tingling with warmth and joy, wishing he was still in Mike's arms. The boys finally sat down, making faces at each other over their cups. Will rested his head on his elbows, watching as Mike spoke passionately about the D&D campaign he was writing. He could listen to Mike talk for hours, watch as his eyes widened and he explained things in great detail. Will was always a great listener.

Eventually, every last drop of hot chocolate had been drained from their cups, and the two boys stood up from the table, making their way jovially to the ice.

"We should hold hands this time," Mike suggested enthusiastically, smiling. "I-I mean," he corrected himself, "so you won't fall again." Mike scratched the back of his neck, embarrassed, but Will was beaming.

"Yeah, so I won't fall," he agreed, but he shared a familiar wink and

smirk with Mike. With that, they intertwined their hands, stepping coolly onto the ice and starting off, grinning at one another in relief that they were side by side, just where they belonged.

The Wheeler's station wagon rumbled gently across the road, the sun almost completely invisible over the horizon. Karen had graciously insisted she take Will home, perhaps she felt guilty because of Will falling, but now the car was quiet compared to the chatter that had taken place in the morning.

Will was resting his head in the crook of Mike's neck, softly nuzzling his nose against him. His hand hadn't left Mike's the whole rest of the day and, even now, with his eyes shut and his breath slow, his hand was resting on top of Mike's, who rubbed his thumb in slow circles on Will's skin.

"I guess he was tired," Karen mused. Mike quickly hushed her. "He's sleeping, mom, don't wake him up!"

Will wasn't asleep, though, despite being awfully close to drifting off. He didn't stir or object, and instead continued to snuggle comfortably against his friend, feeling the most peaceful and content he had felt in months.